

AMERICAN FARMER.

RURAL ECONOMY, INTERNAL IMPROVEMENTS, PRICES CURRENT.

"O fortunatos nimium sua si bona norint
Agricolae." . . . VIRG.

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AGRICULTURE.

CONGRESSIONAL REPORT

Of the Committee on Agriculture, on the memorial of the Delegates of the United Agricultural Societies of sundry counties in the state of Virginia.

FEBRUARY 2, 1821.

Concluded from page 387, volume II.

The committee are of opinion, that so far from there being any thing peculiar in the situation of the United States which renders the general principles they have advanced inapplicable, there are peculiar circumstances which make them apply with more force than to the nations of Europe. It will be recollected, that, in a former part of their observations, it was attempted to prove that in a country where lands of the first quality are still out of cultivation, and are abundant, a system of duties cannot raise the price of one agricultural product, but at the expense of another, and cannot raise the price of any kind permanently at all. But this is not the case in such a country as England. Where the field of production is limited, supply cannot keep pace with demand. In England, therefore, the agriculturists may obtain some compensation for the taxes they have to pay the manufacturers, and, in turn, receive taxes from them. But in this country, the whole benefit is on one side. The agriculturist has no compensation. It is out of the power of the legislature to do any thing for him, but to refrain from oppressing him.

Again, Europe is more dependent on us, than we are on her; because we furnish her with necessaries, and she furnishes us with luxuries; because her means of producing those necessaries which she possesses will be daily diminished, and her dependence on this country will be increased, unless we force her to find out another to furnish her with food, and take off her surplus population.

In the next place, we are not yet so deeply involved in the restrictive policy, as to prevent us from getting rid of it without mischief, as we shall be if we go a few steps further. There are many other peculiar circumstances which forbid our resort to the British policy; but the most important belong to the other branch of the subject proposed to be discussed.

The committee regard the principles they have appealed to as irrefragable. They are not to be refuted by the charge of theory, by the cry that we are supporting foreigners, or by the doctrines of the home market, and the balance of trade. What is this balance of trade? Certainly it is not a very creditable mode of gaining; but is it not evident that if we cannot pay for what we buy, it is clear gain; and that if our citizens wish to buy again, on these terms, it is unnecessary for the government to interfere, as foreigners will refuse to sell? If we can pay only at a sacrifice, then we will cease to trade. The whole of the fallacy proceeds from that fatal error in political economy, that the commodity called money, is regulated by different laws from all other commodities; or from that no less fatal error which springs, perhaps, from the first, that a nation must sell more than it buys, in order to become rich. Now, the very reverse of this is true, for, although in one sense commerce is an exchange of equivalents, what each party receives, must be worth more than what it parts with, or neither is benefited. A nation buying more than it sells, is supposed to be the same with its spending more than it makes, but the cases are not alike. What it sells is surplus, and what it buys is surplus; surely it cannot be a matter of regret when

the latter is worth more than the former, and when there is an excess to devote to reproduction.—It could hardly have been imagined, that in the nineteenth century, in a country whose government is bottomed on the principle that the people are capable of seeing their own interests, it could have been thought necessary for the legislature to interfere, to prevent the merchants of the country from buying more than they ought to buy. What reason there was for this interposition, is shown by the subjoined facts. In 1818, the exportation of cotton goods from Great Britain to the United States, amounted to 2,432,501*l*.; in 1819, it amounted only to 1,109,138*l*.; being a falling off of 1,323,163*l*. The exports of glass, earthenware, hardware, cutlery, in 1818, were 971,285*l*.; in 1819 only 546,741*l*. The amount of woollen goods in 1818 was 3,160,406*l*.; in 1819, it dwindled down to 1,703,024*l*. In all the great leading branches of manufactures, there was a falling off in the exports to the U. States of a full half in the amount, as compared with the year before, and of above 3,500,000*l*.; as compared with the average of exports during the last three years.

A case has been proposed as a very strong one, which is this: suppose that all the various employments of capital are on the lowest level which will continue them. In this state of things one class is entirely thrown out of employment by foreign competition.—They must either be protected or must be ruined, and this, it is said, is the actual condition of the United States. It is divided into two classes, one of which has no employment, and the other barely enough. Without stopping to inquire, whether it be possible for such a case to exist, it will merely be observed that if it did, it would be improper to give the required protection. If the one class has barely such profits as will continue them in employment, they have nothing to spare. If they have any thing to spare, it is proof that their employment is not so full as to preclude new capital, which is contrary to the supposition. The one can only be raised up, by the other being put down. Nor is the case different whether the class which have employment make small or great profits. That which is employed, can only be employed at their expense. In both cases it is unjust, in the latter unnecessary, as great profit will furnish the employment required.

It is not believed that any circumstances exist which will justify the United States in adopting the proposed system. No writer of any reputation ever contended that such a system was compatible with the greatest extension of the national wealth. Even Mr. Hamilton, its great advocate, admitted, that if the system of perfect liberty and free trade were the prevailing systems of nations, they might attain a greater pitch of wealth and prosperity. It has been attempted to be shown, that this limitation to his proposition is founded on a fallacious view of the subject. To propose to increase the wealth of the nation by increasing its taxes is enough to revolt the understandings of ordinary men; yet it seems that a mode of doing this has been discovered, and that the whole mystery lies in calling that which was before called tax—tariff. In the opinion of the committee it is the worst kind of tax, carried to the extent that is proposed; and it would be much better to raise a sum of money by direct taxes at once, and distribute it in bounties among the manufacturers. We should then escape at least some of the oppressive effects of the system.

The chief recommendation of this system has been supposed to be its tendency to promote domestic independence and happiness. This leads the committee to the second view which they proposed to

take of the subject. This is a view which belongs not merely to the political economist, but also to the statesman. The political economist concerns himself only with the manner in which wealth is produced, distributed, and consumed, with a view to its augmentation. The statesman regards this also, but he sometimes sees the necessity of sacrificing a portion of the national wealth in order to obtain objects still more desirable; and no objects would appear better to justify such a sacrifice, than the promotion of national independence, happiness and security. It will be attempted to show, that the system will be more objectionable in this point of view than in any other. The observations the committee have already made on the effect of this system to diminish the national wealth, serve to establish this position. If such really is the consequence, this alone is an unanswerable argument against the supposed effect of the system, to render us independent of foreign powers. If this general position be correct, it is useless to enter into any details to prove that the revenue must be diminished, for whatever diminishes that on which the revenue acts—the general wealth, must diminish the revenue itself, or else increase the burden of taxation—even if we could preserve entire the capital of the country, and employ the same number of hands, as they would be less productively employed, there would be less nett revenue—less of that great agent which has been said to be the first, second, and third requisite in war. Now it is not the gross amount of its capital, but its nett revenue which a nation employs to defend itself. If men and ships could be multiplied by a magic wand, you could not add one soldier to your army, or one vessel to your navy without an addition to your nett revenue. If the income of the nation is destroyed, we must still have revenue; and how shall we get it but by taxing capital? Indeed, where will be our boasted advantages over other nations with regard to taxation, if the proposed tariff is adopted? If we add twenty-five per cent. to the duties, and then have to raise the same amount of revenue by direct taxes, or by an excise on manufactures, (and in the latter case we should have to pay the duties twice,) we at once add one hundred and fifty per cent. to our taxes—that is, every man who before paid a dollar, will now have to pay two dollars and fifty cents; and if we take into consideration the increased value of money, more, if estimated by the price of corn, than a hundred and fifty per cent. every man who before paid a dollar, will have to pay six dollars and twenty-five cents. It would appear that the appreciation of money ought to affect all articles equally; but, in point of fact, it is known, that whilst grain has fallen more than one hundred and fifty per cent. and the other staples of agriculture considerably, that the fall in manufactured products is comparatively small, so that it is quite immaterial whether it is from the appreciation of money, or from external and domestic causes, the ability of the agriculturist to pay taxes will be diminished by the tariff fully in the proportion stated, and the argument against imposing them is not the less strong. Is it possible that they can submit to this intolerable load of taxation without making every lawful attempt to oppose it? Is it possible for them to believe for a moment, that this increase of taxation is the remedy for their distresses?

It is not designed by the Committee to claim any preference for agriculture and commerce over manufactures. They mutually depend on each other; their interests are not adverse; and, if not equally productive, they are all equally necessary to society. But, whilst the political economist might regard it as a matter of indifference, in what proportion the three

great classes are distributed in society, the statesman and patriot could scarcely hesitate to wish that the agricultural class should greatly predominate. The agricultural state is more favourable than any other to the improvement of the physical and moral powers of man. Whilst an agricultural nation will be as powerful as others, it will be more virtuous and happy. It is in this state that the body is invigorated by healthful exercises; that the mind is ennobled by the freedom and independence of rural life; and that man feels the true dignity of his nature. Who would think of comparing the brave, hardy, and independent yeoman of this or any country, to the miserable, half starved, rickety population of an English cotton factory? Who would compare the hardy mountaineer who pursues the deer, or slays the buffalo, their exual in swiftness and in strength, to the poor decrepid, emaciated creature who has been all his life engaged in the same dull, stupifying routine, of drawing out a ten yard thread, or manufacturing the eighteenth part of a pin? Yet it has been attempted to be proved, that there is more vice among the agriculturists than among the manufacturers, because Colquhoun, a writer who is the partisan of the latter, has asserted that more crimes are committed in some of the agricultural than in some of the manufacturing districts of England: whilst the just answer to the argument implied in this statement has been overlooked; that, where it has happened at all, it has been owing to the labourers, from want of employment, being thrown back from the manufacturing towns, which have converted them from healthy and well disposed children, to weekly and depraved adults, on the country from which they originally came.

But, if we are agricultural, we must also be commercial; and commerce, it is said, produces more wars than it pays for. If this be true at all, it can only be true of commerce pursued under the dark influence of the restrictive system. Commerce, free and unfettered, so far from being the cause of wars, would be the source of wealth, power, and prosperity, and a bond which would bind in peace and harmony the universal society of nations. And it is not an unreasonable expectation, that this is the kind of commerce that will be pursued, whenever nations are governed by enlightened rulers, or rather when they assume the right of governing themselves. The whole civilized world is now essentially commercial. From the period that commerce first emancipated the nations of Europe from feudal vassalage, its march has been steady, progressive, and rapid. It has been the great agent by which the treasures of the earth, and the collected wisdom of mankind, have been spread throughout the world, and the source of the prosperity and grandeur of empires. To attempt to impede its progress is to disregard the spirit of the times, and the admonitions of experience. It is as useless as to oppose the march of the human mind towards freedom, knowledge, and happiness; or to contend against the irreversible decrees of nature. Nations have become acquainted with each other, and with the advantages which they may derive from liberal intercourse; and laws are not strong enough to keep them asunder. They can only vex and disturb their intercourse; they cannot prevent it. It is the interest of every nation to pursue commerce, but peculiarly so of the United States, and of every free government. It is equally important to us, whether we consider it as the basis of our navy, or as the grand instrument of the extension of science, social feelings, and freedom throughout the world.

To pursue the subject: if we give to manufactures all the activity which they must derive from the agricultural and commercial classes being taxed to support them, we must in time, become exporters of manufactures. When this takes place, will we not be exposed to all and greater inconveniences than we now are, from the refusal of foreigners to receive our raw produce? Which indeed would be most apt to suffer from vicissitudes in the affairs of the country, a nation engaged in producing the first necessities of life, or one engaged in producing lux-

uries, or only a secondary sort of necessities?—one employed in producing commodities subject to the caprices of taste and fashion, or one employed in producing those which are essential to human existence?—one pursuing occupations which can be changed with facility, or one pursuing those which can be changed only with great difficulty and loss? What, it is asked, would have been the situation of England, where would have been her independence, if Napoleon had succeeded in carrying into effect his continental system? And now, since this system has been partially adopted by the continental nations of Europe, and by ourselves, is not this destruction of the markets for her manufactures next to taxation, the principle cause of the distress of that nation?

It is urged, that a nation should have, in time of war, the necessities which will enable it to carry on a war, and so it should; but the proposed tariff goes infinitely beyond this point. It is believed that the manufacture of all the necessities of war are now perfectly established in this country. Coarse clothing, and arms, and ammunition, are not considered as requiring further support. The inquiry now making, in connexion with the census, will prove, that we have almost every necessary in great abundance. It must be recollected too, that in a future war, unless by our policy we destroy the navy, our commerce will not be so entirely kept down, even if that war is with England. Our navy is now strong enough to prevent the coast from being blockaded, and we shall be enabled to maintain an intercourse with the nations with whom we are not at war. But, it is asked, even if we could not get some of the necessities we required, does any one seriously believe that the result of any war would be affected by such privations; and if they only affect some of its details, delay a march, or even increase the general mass of suffering, what is this compared with the wide spread, and endless calamities that this system would give rise to? Should our policy be adapted to peace, or to war?—to the rule or the exception? Undoubtedly, in time of peace we should prepare for war; but let us not make this preparation at so great an expense, that its exhausting operation will incapacitate, instead of fit us for war.

The demoralizing effects of this system; its tendency to impair the principles of honour and honesty in society, and to give rise to fraud to smuggling, and to all the low artifices and depravity, which are inseparable from all arbitrary legislation and thus to force upon us a sanguinary code of revenue laws, utterly incompatible with the free and humane principles of our government, are too obvious, and have been too fully exposed, to require further comment from the committee.

If these are disastrous effects of this system, what will be thought of those which our free institutions themselves must experience from this unwarrantable interference of the general government with the rights of private property?—an interference, which may render nugatory the whole frame of civil polity which the states have adopted for the preservation of their institutions, and the promotion of their happiness, and which may ultimately, break down, and destroy the very barriers which secure their rights and sovereignty. The blessings of a free government are so great, and the evils of an arbitrary one so grievous, that we cannot be too careful to preserve the one, when we have it, or to avoid the other, it would therefore appear, that whenever a new measure is proposed, the first inquiry of every citizen of a republic should, be what will be its effects on our institutions? Yet, as obvious as is the truth of this observation, it is somewhat remarkable, that in all that has been so ingeniously written and spoken on the subject of banking, and funding, and manufacturing, they have scarcely ever been considered in their effects on our institutions but merely in reference to their financial and pecuniary operations. Our legislators and writers have, for the most part, viewed these subjects as political arithmeticians, rather than as statesmen.

If the view that has been taken of the manufactur-

ing system be correct, it must not only diminish the amount of national wealth, but must distribute it very unequally. This is by far the worst effect of the two. It taxes one class for the support of another, and what is worse, taxes the poor for the sake of the rich. It thus produces the inequality, which is the bane of republics; for it is in fact the influence of the few, or, in other words, aristocracy. Now though no just government will interfere, by sumptuary laws, to restrain the acquisition of wealth, and thereby prevent inequality, so neither will any just government, by fostering particular interests, at the expense of others, promote inequality. This is the opposite, and the worst extreme of sumptuary laws. Nor is the inequality which is produced by the interference of the law, by any means as harmless as that which results from different dispositions, and different capacities in human beings. Whilst the one may act as a salutary stimulus to industry, and its worst consequences are continually neutralized by the alienation and division of property, the other, by creating distrust in the government, produces despair, and depresses industry; and the dread of retributive justice, which always accompanies wealth unjustly acquired, so far from giving rise to division of property, inevitably leads to concentration and primogeniture,—to legal safeguards, corporations, charters, monopolies, and privileged orders. The fear that the law which has given, may also take away, produces the necessity of usurping the law-making power. An alliance between the privileged classes is the inevitable consequence: hence a new accumulation of powers, new pretexts, and new means of oppressing the people. The government must be rewarded for its protection by an increase of power, patronage, salaries, taxes, and a diminution of responsibility. The various departments of the government will no longer move in their appointed spheres, but usurp each other's authority. The state sovereignties will be merged in the general government, and the legislative authority in the executive. Such is the natural consequence of creating separate interests by law: such is the effect of that inequality which is produced by the interference of the law with individual wealth; such the process by which free governments are metamorphosed into aristocracies. It is remarkable, that, although the fundamental maxim of our government, is, that the people are capable of self-government, our legislatures often practically deny it. They place too much reliance on the efficacy of technical rules, and artificial restraints. Legislators consider themselves as the rulers, not the agents of the people; as their guardians, not their attorneys. The disregard of that fundamental maxim, that there is an inherent disposition in man to improve his condition, and sagacity to perceive the means, is believed to be the source of innumerable errors in legislation, and particularly of that, which dictates the usurpation of the right to direct individual wealth.

It is not to be wondered at, that the advocates for the supremacy of the general government should defend a policy which is calculated to aggrandize it, by creating a new class of dependants; but it is greatly to be wondered at, that the friends of state rights should ever have defended it; it can only be because they have not fully perceived this certain consequence. It is believed that no candid mind can fail to perceive, that the effect of the manufacturing, and its kindred systems, will be to transfer a great portion of the wealth of the agriculturists to the other classes. If wealth is thus transferred, so are the means of education—of knowledge, and consequently, of power. This is a subject which demands the serious attention of every agriculturist in the Union. The evil is augmented too, by the heavy duty on books, which bears with peculiar hardship on the agriculturist, who does not enjoy as the merchant, the manufacturer, and the mechanic, the advantage of the public libraries of the cities. The material with which they cultivate the earth, and that with which they cultivate the mind, are alike under the interdiction of this system.

The great influence which the manufactures, scattered as they will be over the whole face of the coun-

try, must acquire, will leave the agriculturists little hope that if they once assent to their system it will ever be revoked. Among the means by which their influence in the government must be increased, the facility which they must derive from our popular modes of election, of directing the suffrages of the persons they employ, is not the least worthy of consideration. This apprehension is not diminished by the consideration that their dependants, as we are told will consist principally of foreigners. As much as we respect that class of people, and as willing as we always are to afford them an asylum in our free and happy land, it is not believed that our legislation could derive much improvement from the counsels of the cotton weavers of Manchester, and the blacksmiths of Birmingham. They have imbibed their political notions under a government too dissimilar to ours to be useful citizens in the capacity of legislators.

The committee have already adverted to the effect of the system to drive population and capital from one state to another, and to aggrandize the general government at the expense of the states. Now, it must occur to every impartial mind, that, if there be any force at all in these observations, the right of the general government to adopt such a system must be more than questionable. Passing over those constitutional objections, which admit of being urged with great force;—that Congress cannot lay taxes but for the purpose of revenue, and that this system is equally incompatible with that part of the constitution which prescribes uniformity of imposts, and with that which forbids taxes on exportation, they will appeal only to that sacred spirit of justice which we all equally venerate, and the authority of which we equally acknowledge; and they ask, in the name of that justice, whether it is possible to believe that the Congress of the United States, can, without violating every principle on which our republican system is founded, tax one class of the community for the support of another?—whether they can debar a man the use of the faculties he has derived from nature?—compel him to abandon an occupation to which he has devoted his life; and which he understands, and to pursue another which he does not understand? Whether it can take away the fruits of one man's industry, earned by the sweat of his brow, and bestow them on another who has not earned them? No legislature, much less a limited one, has any such right. Those who become parties to government cannot be supposed to agree to any other exactions than such as are necessary to defray its just expenses, and to preserve public order and morals. Even, therefore, if it could be made to appear that the effect of the system would be to augment the whole wealth of the nation, this object could not justify a legislature in taxing particular classes, without their consent, for the benefit of the whole. The object of government is to secure men in the exercise of their faculties, not to restrain or direct them; to secure them in the full and free enjoyment and control of their property, and not to distribute and regulate it by its own arbitrary will. It never could have entered into the contemplation of the states, when they agreed to the constitution, that the general government had a right, by its legislation to change their mutual relations towards each other; to enrich one and impoverish another; to strengthen one, and weaken another; and to impair, and, perhaps, ultimately destroy the wealth, freedom, and happiness of them all. Let it not be thought that this is the language of hyperbole. The Committee speak of the natural tendency of the system. No one knows how far, in conjunction with its kindred systems, it may stop short of these consequences; no one knows how far it may go beyond them. Our only safety is in arresting it now, when almost every circumstance is unfavourable to its adoption. There never was a time when there was less apology for it. The adoption of it by the continental nations of Europe will enable us to obtain some benefit by abstaining from it—will diminish the advantages of our manufacturing, and increase those of our tilling the earth;—the unparalleled distresses of the country, of which agriculture experiences by far the heaviest portion; the increased facility of manufacturing

without artificial aid from the fall in the price of labour and materials; every circumstance opposes this policy, and recommends a contrary one.

The people of these states, like the three great occupations that employ them, are united by the strongest ties of reciprocal interest. They feel a just pride in the inheritance bequeathed to them by their ancestors, their common freedom and glory; and they equally appreciate the blessings which they derive from that union, which is the result of their mutual exertions, and which it is mutually their interest to preserve. But these blessings must be seriously impaired, without the cultivation of good will, and the undeviating exercise of justice towards each other. It is by this means only, that the temple of our union can be cemented and consolidated, and that we can preserve it from the fate, which the dissoluble fabrics of other governments have shared. The committee believe that nothing can have a greater tendency to diminish our confidence in the government of the union, and to impair our affection for it, than all those measures which distribute its advantages partially and unequally. They believe that such will pre-eminently be the effect of the manufacturing system, as proposed by the tariff bill that has been reported, and they fear that this is only the commencement of the system: not that they attribute any unfriendly designs, or impure motives, to its friends, but that the same reasoning which has begun the policy, will dictate its continuance, and that the unsuccessful issue of every effort will be an argument, not for abandoning it, but for making a new attempt.

The committee are fully aware of the great importance of certainty and stability in the regulations of trade, and of the tendency of constant fluctuations to impair that confidence which is necessary to the activity and success of commercial operations; but it is desirable that agriculture should experience, at least some of the benefits of those changes which our present system seems destined to undergo. Believing, however, as the committee do, that the proper object of a system of duties is revenue, they regard the revision of the tariff as being strictly the province of the Committee of Ways and Means. With these impressions, and representing, as they do, only one of the great interests of the community, they forbear to propose any positive measures which might seriously and extensively affect them all. They have freely expressed their own sentiments on the important subject referred to them, and they believe those of the great majority of the agriculturists throughout the country. In conformity with these sentiments they offer the following resolution:

Resolved, That the increase of the duties proposed in the bill entitled "A bill to regulate the duties on imports, and for other purposes," reported by the Committee on Manufactures, is incompatible with the interests of agriculture, and of the community generally, and ought not to be adopted.

To the Editor of the American Farmer.

SIR—In the American Farmer of the 17th March, 1820, a writer who signs himself "Silvanus," on the theory and use of lime and Plaster of Paris, says—"We find that lime which contains much magnesia may be laid on land to six, and even ten times the quantity of lime usually employed." Now sir, I have good authority for stating in contradiction, that lime made from magnesia limestone is hot, and used in large quantities, destroys vegetation for several years.—But lime made from calcareous limestone be used in large proportions, without injury to the soil.

H.

RURAL ECONOMY.

FOR THE AMERICAN FARMER.

Every friend to his country cannot but feel deeply interested in any science directly or indirectly cal-

culated to advance its prosperity. To do this, nothing is of greater importance, than the patient and temperate investigation of a subject, believed by many, to be even of paramount consideration to the liberal Arts. A few desultory observations on that state of Agriculture in a considerable portion of that part of Virginia, called the "Northern Neck," may not be altogether uninteresting to my fellow citizens. If you think they will either afford amusement, or are calculated in the smallest degree to awaken the dormant spirit of inquiry and enterprise, you have my permission to lay this before the public. It is a singular fact, that a pursuit which engages the attention of the greater part of our population, and on which as a presumable matter of course we should have more knowledge and experience than on any other, should be less understood and really worse, managed than any trade or occupation known and acknowledged by all to be of infinitely less importance, not only to sectional or individual interest, but to the community at large. In ship-building—in architecture generally—in mercantile speculations, and indeed on every other trade which engages the ingenuity or enterprise of man; we can vie with any nation on the face of the globe. But, in Farming—that delightful calling, which at the same time that it promotes our individual health and comfort, adds bone and sinews to the common body, we are most wofully behind hand. Much has been said about the honour, and ease and comfort of a Farmer's life. This in the abstract may be all very true, but when taken together with concurring circumstances, I am sorry to say, it is far—very far from being generally the case. With judicious management, the farmer might be the most independent, and as an almost necessary consequence, the most happy of men: For after all the world's philosophical vapouring, as to the meaning of this desirable virtue, it must be admitted that the most necessary ingredient in the disputed compound is that ease of circumstances, which liberates man from the shackles of his fellow men. Our climate, our soil—our country, is much praised; at least by ourselves, but, a man having a farm or a horse for sale, must not, as to the merit of either, always be supposed to speak Gospel. We should be acting at variance with the instinctive laws of nature, if we did otherwise than extol our own property. Most of our lands have originally been no doubt good? But they have been, considering the extent of country and scarceness of population, unaccountably and unprecedentedly abused. They have been cut down, worn out by the repeated cultivation of Corn and Tobacco, without the aid of any ameliorating crop, and suffered to grow up in broom-sedge, or wash into gullies. The soil has been pushed until it will no longer afford any profit to the cultivator without a radical change of system. On us devolves the hard task of reclaiming an almost interminable waste of country, made barren by the improvidence of our ancestors. But we ought, perhaps, not to complain. They bequeathed us Liberty, the greatest boon of Heaven to men. They shed their sacred blood in their country's service, not for themselves alone, but their posterity, and for ought they knew, ungrateful millions yet unborn. They were wise legislators, but bad farmers: and as it is an undisputed fact, that no man can excel in more than one pursuit, we should take advantage of the bequeathed blessing to amend the unintended curse. I will now give, as nearly as I can, a description of the general mode of management on those farms in Virginia, which in the outset I promised to depict. The first thing that strikes the attention of the slightest observer, is the great deficiency of every kind of force—horses, oxen and labourers—farming utensils of every description, absolutely necessary for the proper cultivation of the soil, most shamefully deficient. An ox-cart, the wheels of which grate at every turn, and a wagon for which twenty dollars would be a high price, are generally the only wheels on a farm of a thousand acres in extent. Even the few horses allotted for the cultivation of space sufficient for twice their number, if they were good, are nearly all "skin and bone." Ploughs—good ploughs are generally more wanted than any utensil in the whole and necessarily

long list of farming implements. This much would suffice to prove that nothing else can accrue to the uninformed Agriculturist, but a losing business. And this is not all—this is not the worst. Of system, my brethren of the plough, generally, are totally devoid, and in contradiction to the learned speculations of Godwin, I must believe, that any system, even though bad, is better than none. Despotism itself, with all its horror is preferable to anarchy. I will proceed. The cleared land is laid off into 3 or 4 fields, or what is commonly termed shifts. One is cultivated in corn, one in wheat, and another remains for pasture, with as many cattle as would graze double the land allotted them! A nook or a knoll is all the space laid off for fallow, and even this is generally of a quality considered too poor to produce Indian corn at all. The corn stalks, the greatest source of manure according to Colonel Taylor's theory, which the land produces, are suffered to stand till spring, when they are cut down to waste upon the earth, without affording it the smallest return for a crop, of all others the most exhausting. The wheat straw, the next in the scale of importance as a source of manure, is permitted to waste at the stack yard, or to be converted by an easy transition into its "mother earth;" and in fact every means of accumulating this most important ingredient for the improvement of a Farm—this "Primum Mobile" of all good husbandry, manure, are entirely neglected. Under such an execrable system of management as this, it will cease to be a matter of astonishment, that our lands should be even more unproductive than their natural poverty would seem to warrant. It is true, the farmer under all these disadvantages, lives and accumulates, and may be, and often is perfectly independent. But independence is a relative term, and although acknowledged to be the most weighty ingredient in the scale of worldly enjoyment, it does not—it cannot alone constitute anything like real felicity. A man that owes nothing, with one shilling in his pocket more than what is sufficient to procure the immediate and actual necessities of life, may be as free as a Lord with millions at his heels. But is it in his power to gratify as many wishes, or to enjoy an equal portion of what the world terms happiness? These questions I leave for others to answer. Frugality is the leading trait in the character of American Yeomanry; it is by this happy virtue that they live; it is by this, that they float buoyantly through the tempestuous sea of worldly depravity, to the calm haven of aged felicity.—What a contrast between the Farmer and the Merchant! The former with a landed estate of twenty or fifty thousand dollars, denies himself the pleasures of society—often of necessary clothing for his comfort—of many of the actual necessities, and all the luxuries of the world; he wades through a long life of anxiety and trouble, and finally quits the stage with this only consolation to sooth his dying pillow, that he hands down an unimpaired patrimony, as a legacy to his children. How is it with the Merchant? Without one cent of capital he commences the world on "paper wings"—upon the credit of others; rents a fine house magnificently furnished—Decorated with the costume of a Prince, he moves in all the pride and pomp of real wealth—of real independence. He quaffs with his associates, the most costly wines which the country or commerce affords—he enjoys above all, during an extended life of pleasure, the agreeable society of his compeers in trade, of his compatriots in luxury. But his "hour must come"—the tide must ebb!—He "shuffles off this mortal coil," and leaves to his issue his example alone, as a truly precious inheritance: and they with the instinctive faculty of less rational creatures, follow in his wake, until either caught by their own imprudence, or fattened by the crumbs of heedless profligacy. That there may be many exceptions on both sides, to this picture is readily and cheerfully admitted: But under such general circumstances, the possession of riches is truly a curse. But says Horace, "Nemo, cum sibi sortem, contentus vivat, &c."—true; I am, however, far from complaining of the parsimony of nature to my brethren in trade. I only lament the strange infatuation of man's not being able properly to appreciate the liberal donations of Heaven, and the unaccountable coincidence of circumstances which justifies now, as well as many centuries past, the plaintive notes of the Mantuan Bard, "O for-

tunatos nimium, si sua bona, norint Agricolas!"—I weep, that like Tantalus, we should never be able to grasp those blessings which Heaven has set before our eyes. Surrounded on all sides by "loaves and fishes," the worm of hunger for ever gnaws,—up to the chin in water, the parched tongue is never moistened. In giving a fair description of our deficiencies. I aim not to deride, but only if possible, to cure them.—At some future moment of leisure I shall endeavour to give, in detail, such specific directions for the promotion of the Agricultural interest, as an acknowledged few years of experience, may entitle to credit. And to conclude this number, with as much candour as it was commenced, I shall not shrink from placing my name at its bottom, although perfectly aware of the "little importance which a printed paper carried with it, even with the respectable signature of Sir Wm. Draper."

VINT HILL, 12th Feb. 1821..

R. B. BUCKNER.

ON THE CULTURE OF IRISH POTATOES,

Inquiries concerning the effect of the Oat crop, &c.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE AMERICAN FARMER.

MR. SKINNER,

I have often heard tell, as we say in the country, of very great crops of Potatoes being produced in Maryland; but in the course of some years farming it has never fallen to my lot to have a large crop of them, or even a middling one, compared to those which it is well known are raised in New England, although I have taken much pains, and followed the best practical rules I could obtain—nor indeed has such a crop in my neighbourhood ever fallen under my actual observation. I have no doubt, however, they sometimes occur with us, but so rarely as to be merely exceptions to the general crops. I am led to believe that the cause of this deficiency is chiefly attributable to the *dryness of our climate*, and not in any material degree to our management of the crop; though probably that might be mended in some respects. I have generally used unfermented stable manure, rather plentifully, and most commonly upon spots of poor land, with an eye to its improvement; but this, I am now practically persuaded, is a bad plan in the potato crop. I have succeeded better upon good moist land *without manure* both in quantity and quality; and I have invariably observed that the drier the season the more inferior the Potatoes. Being desirous to improve our practice in regard to this useful crop, of which, by the by, I have a more favourable opinion than our farmers in general; I wrote for information to a gentleman in Massachusetts, who has lately been awarded a premium by the Agricultural Society of that state, for the immense crop of *six hundred and fourteen bushels from one acre of land*, and have been favoured with the following account of the management of that noble crop.

"The field is situated on the eastern side of a heavy swell; the soil is a deep yellowish loam, somewhat stony—two years previous to planting, it had been used as part of a sheep pasture, in which the sheep had been folded in autumn during the night. In October 1819, the ground was broke up, and in the following spring was cross-ploughed, harrowed, and struck into furrows about three feet apart—then was added in the trenches thirty-seven loads (of 33 bushels each) to the acre, of unfermented manure, made from neat cattle and sheep, on which the seed was placed twelve inches part; the plough then followed, throwing the loam to the manure, the hand hoe following to complete the planting. The quantity of seed used was forty bushels (cut so as to give about four eyes to a piece,) which I think one third too much. The planting was completed the 27th May, and on the 6th and 7th June the weeding was performed by passing the plough on each side the row as near as possible, without disturbing the manure, throwing the earth in a ridge in the centre, following with the hand hoe to

dress the plants. The second and last dressing was performed on the 16 and 17th June in a similar manner, excepting that the ridge was split with the plough, giving to each row its proportion of earth. The plants at this time were about eight inches high, and not in the bud; on attentive observation it was discovered at harvesting, that the potatoes in many parts of the field had been covered too deep, thereby lessening the influence of the sun and air; this, together with too great a shade from the tops will induce me in future to prefer planting in hills, at three feet by two and a half in the distance."

In this you will perceive there is no material variation from our practice, except in the use of *cool* manure, instead of the *heating* kind, which we generally use, and which it is obvious, I think, will be found in our dry climate much more suitable. It is observable too, that my correspondent must have cut his sett's very large, or he could scarcely have used even two thirds the quantity of seed he mentions. I have not found the whole potato better than a cut one, but I think it important, that the cuts should have several eyes; shallow planting may do in Massachusetts, but in ordinary seasons I do not think it will do with us.

Since I have taken up the pen, permit me to inquire of some of your practical correspondents, if they find any truth in the notion which I have heard some farmers suggest, that there is something peculiarly detrimental in *oat crops* to the immediately subsequent growth of wheat or rye upon the same land, over and above the exhausting nature of the crop. I confess I have thought or *fancied* the same thing in the course of my little experience; and if it be really founded in fact, it is certainly of sufficient importance to the farming interest to excite a practical inquiry by which it might be demonstrated. I have heard it stated that, one of our most eminent farmers, has, from such a belief, almost entirely ceased to grow oats.

And now sir, permit me to ask if your readers are not soon to be favoured with the promised "Observations on the Agriculture of Virginia," of which you have given the preliminary paper in No. 42, in this year of the Farmer, for one, I have been looking out for them with some eagerness and curiosity, being generally at least as well pleased with Mr. Editor's own contributions to the Farmer, as with those of his correspondents, and the tour alluded to by him, must have furnished to his attentive and zealous observation, much that would gratify and interest his readers generally, and none more than

A LEARNER.

Anne Arundel County, March 1.

Cultivation, mode of preserving and use of RUTA BAGA.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE AMERICAN FARMER.

SIR,

My crops of Ruta Baga have quite equalled my expectation in their products and effect, in forcing calves and feeding neat cattle. I am so well convinced of the importance of Swedish turnips in our modes of husbandry, that I am resolved to cultivate every year, eight or ten acres of them, not only as they enable me to obtain more milk, but *in aid of Indian corn*, to lay on more fat, and flesh than I had ever seen put in the same time, upon fattening Bullocks.

My experiments have been made upon soils varying from stiff clay to sandy loam, which had been subjected to different crops, and various modes of cultivation. New land is always to be preferred; next, old sward reduced by caustick, lime and winter fallowing. Various matters for this as for most other crops, when skillfully applied, have proved good manure. My practice has led me to select a light loam, upon gravelly sub soil. Ashes, whether of

wood or turf, well mixed with ditch mud and yard manure, I have found much better than dung alone, or any other substance within my reach. The only caution I should give, relates to the necessity of affording a larger portion of *well rotted* animal matter than most crops require; for notwithstanding the soundness of the theory which good farmers follow in using dung in its freshest state for all white crops, I am satisfied for Swedish turnips, the animal matter should have been reduced by fermentation.

I cause the manure to be placed at proper distances on the head lands, the soil to be ploughed by Wood's or Barnard's plough to its *utmost depth*, and left in such state of roughness as exposes it most to the action of the frost, throughout the winter; in April to be ploughed across, not quite so deeply as before, to be harrowed twice, and ploughed again to its utmost depth—early in June to be rolled and harrowed, and once more ploughed and harrowed, until fine tilth is given. Ridges are formed by throwing a furrow from either side, leaving a space of thirty-nine inches between the rows, as for potatoes; the cart by means of one man, who pitches from the body, a boy who drags from the tail, and another who spreads as the horses move, deposits the manures in three rows at once; the furrows are then re-turned by a one horse plough *immediately*, to prevent exhalation by the sun. A seed harrow having passed, the drill is next applied. The best drill I have used, is made by Mr. Barnard, of Philadelphia. It is not unlike the implement which Mr. Sinclair advertises, with a claim for patent.

The cylinder, hopper, frame, cutter, tube and roller, are the *same*. It varies only in having cranks to communicate motion to the cylinder, and six pieces of jack chain attached to the tube, to drag, and thus cover the seeds by fine particles of soil, before the roller comes in contact with them. I attribute my success in no slight degree to the operation of Barnard's drill, for which he claims no patent, and asks but patronage to reward his skill in adapting parts of various English drills to our purposes.

The wheel rolls the path, on which the cutter follows, and breaks anew the soil, the chain covers the seeds at various depths, which causes them to vegetate, at as different times, and produce plants, after the fly has made bare the ridges by destroying all that had first appeared. The early growth of weeds must be removed with the utmost care by a small sharp triangular hoe, of four inches at its base. An expert lad, after a little practice, strikes out the unthrifty plants, leaving spaces of eight or ten inches between the rest, and with the corner of the hoe, cuts off the weeds nearest to them.

In eight or ten days after, a one horse plough passes within six inches of the plants, and throws a small furrow from both sides of the ridges.—The hoe is again applied to remove weeds or "earth up" the turnips when their under leaves are about four inches long, the earth is re-turned; once more thrown off, and again put back by the plough, at proper intervals determined, as in a potato crop, by the growth of the plants, the weather, or judgment of the cultivator. In November the roots are made bare by the plough, carted to an enclosure near the barn

yard "topped" and thrown into a *large cellar*, where they are distributed among shavings or *dry earth*, to prevent fermentation. To facilitate the operation of topping, a stave is driven into the ground, upon the end of which the turnips rest, whilst the necks and tops are cut, and made to fall on one side, the tails and dirt to drop upon the other. Some of my last crop are now in the field exactly as you saw them grow; part are in cellar, the rest are in an *open* out house, formed of rough boards, protected but by straw and shavings. The necks and tops of those in the field are quite rotten, but the roots are sound. Those in the cellar are fit for the table; the others are frozen as hard as stones, but when chopped are eaten by my neat cattle with as much avidity and *effect* as if they had not been exposed to cold. I think I have not lost five bushels of my whole crop of near three thousand, with the necks included. The importance of fine tilth has been so well established that I shall but remark, to support my practice, that, of all the esculent roots of which I know any thing, I have seen none whose fibres are so many, so slender, or so long, as those of *ruta baga*. My mode varies essentially from that of Mr. Cobbett; I use equal parts of soaked and dry seeds, my ridges are not made so high, nor are the plants placed so far asunder. I do not transplant, but drill my crop *early* in June, in order that it shall have gained vigour to support drought before the heats of July and August. My transplanted turnips always failed, whether I had followed closely his direction as to the time and mode of moving them, or had used transplanting trowels to prevent the earth's being moved from contact with them.

In our country it is absurd to follow English systems, where they are opposed to the climate or circumstances, which control us. High ridges with *deep trenches* at their sides, may be well enough to guard against super-abundant moisture, the enemy of British farmers; but where the cultivator most dreads drought, it is unwise to make artificial drains, to carry off the occasional showers, for which, in the hottest months, he prays most ardently. I have been vexed at having half my crop washed bare by a single storm, arising after a time of excessive dryness, when the high ridges had just been stirred according to Cobbett's plan, to revive them. However great the expense at first view may appear, I am satisfied that the whole cost of cultivation, does not exceed at the present price of labour, eleven dollars per acre. Four ploughings, six harrowings, two rollings with oxen,

Drilling with Barnard's harrow, by means of this implement a man can drill ten acres, with ease, in one day, as he but passes it before him on the top of the ridge, whilst he walks at his usual gait.

Carting and distributing twenty-five loads of compost in the furrows, Returning the furrows to cover the manure, and four horse hoeings afterwards,

Two hand hoeings by a boy, four days, at 37½ cents,

84 15

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811 00

In the preparation of the land, I shall this year substitute Beaton's Cultivator for the plough and harrow, and thus diminish expense and gain time. It is to be recollected, that the soil was reversed last autumn by a furrow of twelve inches, or I should not think of using a cultivator, which cannot, without the aid of a plough, give me the benefit of earth, which probably has never been exhausted.

TULL.

Philadelphia County, February }
14th, 1821. }

COMMUNICATED FOR THE AMERICAN FARMER.

BY G. W. JEFFREYS, ESQ.

Virginia, Port Royal, January }
8th, 1819. }

DEAR SIR,

The delay in answering yours of September last, has been owing to a succession of ill health, and unavoidable demands upon my time. My reasons for preferring narrow to wide ridges in horizontal ploughing, are, first. If the declivity is steep, wide ridges would produce a great and inconvenient fall from bed to bed.—Secondly. This fall would be so great as to require ploughing on the upper side of the bed below the soil, to the great impoverishment of the land for two or three feet wide. Thirdly. The water is more divided, arrested, and absorbed, by narrow, than by wide ridges, and the greater the declivity, the more necessary are the means for arresting its force. And, fourthly, I consider narrow ridges as more effectual than wide, for ameliorating and improving the land whilst at rest.

Bad health, interrupted my draining experiment for several years past. In this, a finishing effort is contemplated. You shall have a diagram and its solution next winter, if I recollect, or you will remind me of the promise. Nearly a hundred acres of re-drained ground are intended this year to be cultivated in corn.

Having tried both, tobacco and bread stuff, the cultivation of the latter has been infinitely most profitable to me, even without estimating its vast superiority in supplying the means for raising manure, and saving the labour necessary for its application. You have seen my general idea for managing a bread stuff farm. Of particular modifications arising from climate, soil and situation, it would be presumptuous in me to judge; but yet from the prices you state, and the topography of your estate enclosed in your letter, I cannot entertain a doubt that the abandonment of tobacco will be greatly to your interest. If wheat is precarious in your low grounds, or the expense of transportation too great, oats and grass seeds may follow corn; the former to unite with the pumpkins in raising pork, and the latter to bestow some profit in raising cattle and horses, or mules. This year's experience (I should have said the last year's) has convinced me that hogs are the most profitable stock. I began to feed 150 with pumpkins, the latter end of August, as soon as ripe ones could be got.—

They were enclosed on one acre, which had eight cart loads of wheat straw scattered equally over it. They had no other food until the first of December. From being very poor they had become fat. The pen was removed at first in ten days, and the period was gradually shortened to seven, as they fattened, and the ground well ridged by good ploughing, as soon as the pen was removed. The land in pumpkins was ten acres, and the hogs, whilst eating them, manured twelve, with the assistance of the wheat straw. Besides, ten beaves and twenty sheep eat a portion of the pumpkins.

Your hilly land of the soil you described, is capable of preservation and high improvement, by filling it with vegetable fibres. This is a resource against washing, so far superior even to horizontal ploughing, that I only consider the latter as its auxiliary. The meadow oat is the grass adapted to this service. It may be sown with wheat or oats, provided the seed is covered shallow, and by not tending the land oftener than every fourth year, will well perform its office. Wishing you all the agricultural success your solicitude so well deserves.

I remain with great respect,

Sir,

Your most obedient serv't
JOHN TAYLOR.

From the Southern Patriot.

UPON THE

CULTURE OF COTTON IN NEW LAND.

MR. EDITOR,

It is the usual remark among cotton planters that new ground, the first seasons, seldom produces a good crop, when the growth of the weed, the number of pods, and every other appearance of the plant would justify the expectation of a great crop. Having for many years noticed the correctness of the above observation, I shall offer a few reflections upon the culture of cotton in such lands, and endeavour to suggest a plan which promises to produce the first season a crop more answerable to the appearance of the cotton than is generally obtained. This disposition in new land to produce a vigorous growth, has often been observed by practical farmers to take place, even upon lands not of the first quality; and, therefore, the few observations I shall submit to their consideration will apply in a certain extent to new lands, generally; though such modifications as the quality of the land may require, will readily offer themselves upon the occasion.

From the shortness of our seasons luxuriant cotton, in new land, generally brings to perfection only a small proportion of its fruit; the cause of this I presume to be a deficiency of air, light, and heat of the sun, from the *undue growth of the plant*. There appears to exist in new land a capacity of producing more superfluous growth, than when the same land has been made more productive by manure; and I have often obtained more from 4th and 5th year's lands, than from very fine cotton-land the first season of cultivation, though the cotton was much inferior in its appearance. I premise that my remarks allude to the lower parts of

our state, but not to the islands, where the seasons are more favourable to the cotton plant, and I am not perfectly acquainted with the mode of cultivation to use upon them.

Cotton planters as far as I have observed, make their beds, at first, the same distance; they intend to cultivate the field in future; and, do not alter their distance from one to the other, but merely change their place to the old alley. They are, generally, made from four to five feet apart for the long staple, and from three to four feet for the short cotton. I propose to have the beds for the long staple at least six feet apart, and to leave at the last thinning, single plants from three to five feet upon them. For the short staple to have the beds five feet asunder, and to leave single plants from two or three feet upon them. This method to be pursued from one to three years according to the strength and quality of the land, and then to make such changes as the nature of the case requires.

This mode of planting will afford so much sun and air as to ensure in common seasons, not only a fine appearance of the cotton plant, but a maturity of the pods before frost. The middle of August give the cotton a *last working* by slightly hoeing the alleys, and hoeing down the beds well, so as to check the nourishment of the plants; also, top the cotton, not by *finching* off the mere top of the plant, but by *cutting* off the top of the stalk, in the long staple, from one to two feet from the top; and in the short staple, from six inches to one foot.

As the fields should be in a *clean* state when this hoeing takes place, each hand will top and hoe half an acre with ease and carelessness in the day. In such situations, where the planter can avail himself of *flowing* the cotton field: in the fall, about two weeks before the usual time of frost, flow the fields as practised with success in Georgia, to check the vegetation of the plants and hastening the opening of the pods. In preparing the beds in new lands the use of the *plough* enables the planter to have his work much more *effectually*, and with more facility performed, and upon this preparation the success of the crop greatly depends.

Presuming that every planter admits, that the cotton plant in our climate thrives best in a warm soil, with the most exposure to a dry and warm air; and is most injured by all those causes which preduce moisture, shade and a damp atmosphere; I, with some reluctance, add my opinion, that the best method to ensure the greatest and most durable effects by the heat of the sun, and the exhalation from the surface of the earth during the growth of the cotton plant, will be, to have the beds made from east to west, so as to receive the most benefit from the sun in the alleys, and in lessening the effects of rains in the summer, by promoting the evaporation from them. I believe it will be granted by all cotton planters, that from the middle of July, if the crop be in good state, the less rain we then have for the remainder of the season the better for the cotton crop, since much injury is sustained from too much moisture in the beds and alleys, and a want warm of air during the latter part of the season.

Not intending to make any further reference to the mode of cultivating cotton, different from the usual one in the lower districts, I will only add that I consider large beds, made as early in the winter as possible, likely to produce a dry and warm soil in new lands, and as greatly *diminishing* the labour of all crops under the bed system, upon lands generally, but more especially on old and grassy fields.

Fully aware of the disposition in too many agriculturists to ridicule all theorists, I shall not attempt to advance an argument to show the correctness of my opinion relative to the direction of the cotton beds, and the mode of culture here recommended; but I only hope if the practical planter rejects the theory, he will give the plan a fair trial.

To such of my readers, as take pleasure in endeavouring to account for the many operations of nature, and studying the various systems proposed by agricultural writers to obtain the best products from our fields, and who *feel* disposed to reject my opinions altogether, I will commend that old sentiment, which though often adverted to, appears not less applicable to my purpose.

Si quid novisti rectius istis,

Condidus imperti, si, non his utere mecum.

A COTTON PLANTER.

FROM THE NATIONAL RECORDER.

Report of the Curators of the Philadelphia Society for promoting Agriculture on the Cultivation of Flax.

The curators taking into consideration the present distressed state of agriculture, from the extreme depression of the prices of all the products of the soil, and believing that there is no immediate prospect of a favourite change—beg leave to draw the attention of the society to an object which, in their view, well deserves the most serious consideration and strenuous exertions for its accomplishment. The experience of past years has fully established the fact, that so long as the nations of Europe remain in a state of peace, and adhere to the system of protecting the respective products of their soil from the competition of all extraneous supplies, they will continue independent of this country for all articles of subsistence; and the extent and fertility of our own soil are such, that a comparatively small portion to what is now in cultivation, will furnish abundant means for domestic consumption. The natural consequence must be, that if the soil cannot be appropriated to the cultivation of some other commodity than that of subsistence, a considerable portion now in unprofitable culture, must be abandoned and suffered to grow up in waste. The aversion of this impending calamity to the agricultural prosperity of our state, can only be effected by the development of some other resource of the soil; and every proposed improvement which has for its object the creation of a new source of wealth, claims at least a fair and full experiment.

While the products of agriculture have experienced a diminution of value so destructive to the welfare and prosperity of the middle and

northern states, the sources from which the southern states derive their immense wealth remain partially unobstructed.

The cotton of the south, notwithstanding its wonderful augmentation, still finds its way to a profitable market; its consumption grows with accelerated growth; invention has been racked, and the art and ingenuity of man have been successfully employed to apply its use, to the exclusion of almost every other article of manufacture.

The invention of the cotton gin, for separating the seed from the cotton, and the application of improved machinery to the manufacture of the raw material, have given to this article, all its present value and importance; they are the great agents by which all the wonders of the cotton cultivation in the United States have been effected.

The capacity of our soil for the growth of flax cannot be questioned. The tedious and destructive process, and expensive labour, by which it has been hitherto produced in the raw material, have rendered its general cultivation wholly impracticable; and the want of machinery to manufacture it with the same facility as cotton, has deprived it of that share in the consumption of our country, which, with the removal of these difficulties, flax may justly claim. If, by modern improvements, the difficulties which have hitherto prevented the general cultivation of flax are removed, and if by the application of machinery, the raw material can be manufactured with greater facility than cotton, a new and profitable direction is offered to the drooping industry of our country in the growth of flax, and the establishment of a useful manufacture.

The society, on receiving information that flax machines had been invented in England, for preparing flax without having recourse to the former expensive and destructive operation of dew or water retting, and by which the labour was greatly diminished, took immediate steps to procure them. Funds were transmitted to England, and letters directed to several gentlemen in London, requesting their assistance to forward the views of the society. Owing to some difficulties found in the laws of Great Britain against the exportation of new inventions, the society have not succeeded in obtaining them; but the president of the society with his accustomed zeal, is persevering in efforts which it is confidently expected will be successful.

The flax machine now exhibited to the society, was constructed by artists of this city, on the plan of Hill and Bundy's flax machine, and is confined to the operation of breaking the flax in its dry state, and is calculated with the labour of two boys, to break forty pounds per day. The same artists propose to construct a rubber for preparing the flax for the hackles, provided the society will afford them suitable encouragement. Other forms have been invented and tried in England for the accomplishment of the same object with various success; and if the ingenious efforts of our own countrymen, so fruitful in invention, were attracted to this object, there is every reason to believe that still greater improvements would be effected.

The flax machines propose to effect for the

culture of flax, what the cotton gin has accomplished for the cultivation of cotton. And with the accomplishment of this object, a statement of the relative expenses of the cotton and flax culture will furnish data, on which may be fairly estimated the value and importance of the cultivation of flax to our state. The product of clean cotton may be stated at an average of 250 pounds to the acre; that of flax varies from 200 to 600 pounds, and may be rated at an average of 300 pounds to the acre. We have taken our estimate of the average quantity per acre of our flax culture, from the produce of an acre according to the old mode of retting and dressing; but it will be seen in the English publications, that the new mode of dressing by machines, increases the quantity so as to double it, and the strength of the fibre is perfect; so that, instead of getting a sixth part of the whole plant retted, one-third is the general produce of the operation by the machines, which prepare the flax without the delay and risk of dew or water retting. The expense and labour of pulling the flax are much less than picking the cotton, which requires the constant application of a force for a period of four months. Flax does not require a more expensive tillage than wheat, to ensure a good crop, and when pulled green, and while the seed is soft in the capsule, is less exhausting to the soil, and may be advantageously substituted for any other crop, in any proposed system of rotation. Flax when broke in the dry state, yields a considerable quantity of offal or chaff, which, together with the seed in its imperfect state, form a most nutritious article of food for cattle. Flax has been hitherto cultivated in this country principally with a view to the profit of the seed, and hence the fibre has been coarse and harsh, but when pulled green, its quality is greatly improved.—When the same attention shall be bestowed on the culture of flax, that has been devoted to the cultivation of grain, and the same care adopted in the selection of the best seed, a still further improvement in the quality, and increase in the quantity of the product, may be confidently calculated on.

In addition to all the advantages which the invention of flax machines afford to the cultivation of flax, the curators have ascertained, that there is at present in operation, in the vicinity of Frankford, machinery for spinning flax with greater facility than can be accomplished by machinery spinning cotton. Agreeably to the statement of the proprietor of this machinery, made to the curators at their request, and submitted to the society—"the expense of attending one frame of 24 spindles, and preparing the flax (except hackling) is thirty-three cents per day, and the average quantity of yarn is about 24 pounds per day, or one pound of yarn to the spindle per day, equal to the production of one spindle for cotton per week."

The extension of the flax culture by increasing the supply, will afford encouragement to the manufacture of it, and the manufacture will reciprocate equal encouragement to its cultivation, by enlarging the demand. The great consumption of our country of articles of which flax is the material, has been made exclusively sub-

foreign countries; and deriving all the benefits of that consumption, they have studiously encouraged the growth of flax, and protected the manufacture of it by large bounties. How important is it then, that we should avail ourselves of improvements calculated to render us independent of all foreign supply of this important article in the consumption of our country, and to give to our own industry all the advantages to be derived from the cultivation and manufacture of flax. If these advantages have not been overrated, it is a subject of great national importance; and if the legislature of our state were properly impressed with its bearing on the general interests of agriculture, they might be induced to afford encouragement adequate to the accomplishment of the object.

The curators offer these suggestions to the society with a view to draw their attention to the importance of the flax cultivation to the interests of agriculture, and induce them to adopt all the means within their power to give the flax machines a full and fair experiment, and to afford to them the benefits of any improvements of which they may be susceptible. Our country is indebted to native invention for the cotton gin, which has given so much value to the cultivation of cotton; and if the inventive faculties of our countrymen could be directed to the improvement of the flax machines, by offering suitable encouragement, there is every reason to calculate on final success. The wonderful improvements of modern times in all labour saving machinery, and the eminent instances of successful invention, would justify the opinion, that discovery on any given subject, may be confidently sought. And on this account, the offer of a premium, or even simply a topic for investigation, is often of national benefit. The funds of the society can never be appropriated to a more useful purpose, than offering premiums for useful inventions adapted to prescribed ends. And what end can be proposed of greater magnitude to the interests of agriculture, than that which, if accomplished, is calculated to furnish a new resource from the soil, to give value to industry, and afford assurance to the farmer, that he shall no longer be compelled to toil in vain, and waste his vigour and strength in unprofitable labour. The curators respectfully recommend to the society to offer a premium to the person who shall make and exhibit to the society, on or before the first day of January next, the most perfect machines for preparing flax in the raw material, without having recourse to the former process of dew or water retting, and by which the labour and expense of preparing it will be essentially diminished.

Published by order of the society.

STEPHEN DUNCAN,
JAMES M. BROOM,
ISAAC C. JONES,
REUBEN HAINES,
JOSEPH R. PAXON,

Curators.

At a stated meeting of the "Philadelphia Society for promoting Agriculture," held on the 20th of February, 1821.

It was resolved, that a PREMIUM OF TWO

HUNDRED DOLLARS be offered to the person, who shall exhibit to the society, the most perfect machines for dressing and preparing flax, without DEW or WATER RETTING, on or before the first of January next.

The society reserves the right of distributing the premium in whole, or in part, according as it shall deem the machines to have merit; and also to give any proportion thereof to the person who shall exhibit any one of the machines competent to perform the operation required.

The machines to be approved of by the society, before awarding the premium, which may be entirely withheld, if the society shall deem such machines not to have sufficient merit.

RICHARD WISTAR, Jun.
Assistant Secretary.

FRANKFORD, 2d Mo. 16th, 1821.

Respected Friend—I have received thy note of 14th instant, on behalf of the Philadelphia Society for promoting Agriculture. I applaud their endeavours to promote the cultivation of flax, and hope the manufacturing of it may also claim their attention. I shall willingly communicate what information I can on the subject. I have only had one spinning frame (or thrassell) in operation, which has produced a profit equal to my expectations; the quality of the yarn may be ascertained by examining the enclosed sample: finer yarns may be spun of flax of finer quality, suitable for sewing thread, &c. The expense of attending one frame of 24 spindles, and preparing the flax (except hatchelling,) is 33 cents per day; the average quantity of yarn is about 24 pounds, or one pound per spindle per day, equal to the production of one spindle for cotton per week. The machinery is constructed on the most improved English plan, and I am doubtful of the practicability of making any material improvement in the construction. I am, respectfully, thy friend,

JOSIAH CHAPMAN.

STEPHEN DUNCAN, Esq.

P. S. This kind of flax machinery was first erected in the United States in the year 1808, by George Brown, and has been in operation since that time, in manufacturing twine, shoe yarn, sewing thread, sail duck, bedtick, sheeting, webbing; and from the tow, bagging ditto for bailing, cotton carpet warp and filling, wrapping yarn and candlewick, &c.

The number of spindles in the state of New York is 162: in New Jersey about 600; a part of which were erected by a Frenchman, and are differently constructed: all those in New Jersey are manufacturing sail duck for the United States navy on my plan. In Pennsylvania there are only 96 spindles, the whole of which will be in operation in the course of the next month.

J. C.

* * POTATO OATS, FOR SEED.—A small parcel of this superior kind of oats have been received, for sale at 62½ cents per bushel, by Messrs. Hopkins & Moore, Pratt Street wharf. This grain produces more meal than any other kind of oats. The straw too, makes a better fodder than the common kinds, as it has more leaves, which are best preserved when cut at early maturity.

THE FARMER.

BALTIMORE, FRIDAY, MARCH 9, 1821.

Our subscribers are remained that according to the invariable terms of this paper, their subscription is to be paid on or before the first day of next month—for volume third. We entreat them to recollect that every thing depends on their punctuality, and that the merits of the AMERICAN FARMER whatever they may be, have arisen from the promptness with which calls of this kind have been met by its patrons. It is earnestly desired, that on the perusal of this notice, each subscriber will put the amount in a letter addressed to the Editor, who agrees to take all risk of mail.

We have now concluded the very able Report of the first Congressional Committee, that has ever been appointed to guard or to promote the Agricultural interests of this vast Republic. For the appointment of this Committee, we are indebted to the Memorial of the United Agricultural Societies of Virginia. It is not a little surprising that the paramount interest of this country, has never before presented even a partial declaration of its wishes, or pressed upon the constituted Authorities, the distinct consideration of its rights. But the result of this effort must be highly gratifying to all, whilst it is auspicious of the happiest consequences, if they shall be hereafter sought with equal judgment, and with undiminished zeal. It was a matter of regret that we could not put the whole Report in one number, but its great length compelled us to divide it.

We have it now in our power to supply a few copies of the first volume of the American Farmer, which we are enabled to do, in consequence of having re-printed a few of the numbers. The price of the volume, bound, is five dollars, and will be forwarded according to order.

VIRGINIA THORN SEED.—Some prepared seed of this valuable thorn, can now be had at Georgetown, District of Columbia, either of Doctor John Little, or of Mr. Joshua Pierce, at two dollars per quart, and of the latter, quicks also may be had at six dollars per thousand—he likewise has the prepared seed of the Pyracantha Thorn at five dollars per quart, and the quicks at six dollars per thousand, as well as a very general variety of fruit and ornamental trees, at twenty cents to one dollar each.

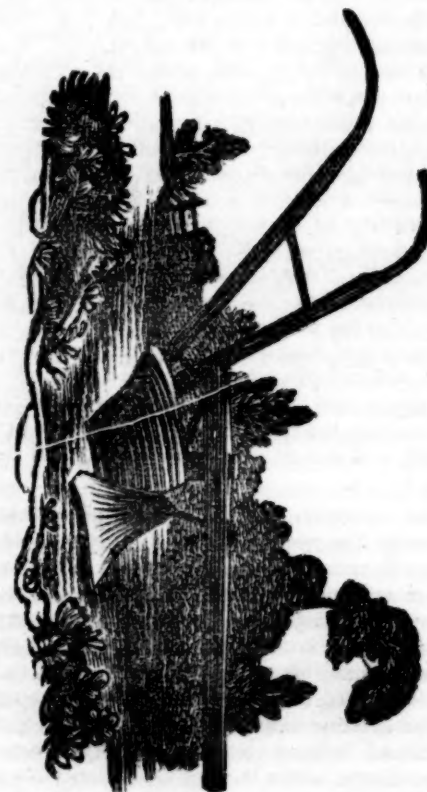
Present Prices of Country Produce in this Market.

FLOUR, from the wagons, \$3 50 to 3 62½—WHISKY, from do. 25 cts. per gal.—CORN, 27 cts.—WHEAT, 70 to 73 cts.—RYE, 40 to 42 cts.—BARLEY, 45 to 50 cts.—OATS, 20 to 25 cts.—New Orleans SUGAR, \$8 75 to 10—MUSCOVADO, do. \$7 50 to 9 25—AMERICAN WHITE LEAD, \$12 50—Ground, do. \$13 a 14—LINSEED OIL, 75 cts.—FEATHERS, 40 to 45 cts.—HAY, per ton \$17—STRAW, do. \$8—POTATOES, 50 cts. per bu.—LIVE STOCK, 5 to \$6—BEEF, prime pcs. 8 to 10 cts.—CORN BEEF, 7 cts.—MUTTON, 8 to 10 cts.—HAMS, 10 to 12 cts.—MIDDLINGS, 8 to 10 cts.—BUTTER, 20 to 25 cts.—CHEESE, 8 to 10 cts. per lb.—TAR \$1 75—TURPENTINE, soft, \$2—PITCH, \$2½—ROSIN, common 1¼—bright do. \$3 per barrel.—VARNISH, 25 cts.—SPIRITS TURPENTINE, 33 cts. per gal.—COTTON, good Upland, 15 to 16 cts per lb.—RICE, \$3 to \$3½—ship and flooring PLANK, \$27 to 28—SHINGLES, best \$8—common \$3 to 4½ p. M.—OAK, wood, \$5—HICKORY, \$6 per cord—CLOVER, seed \$7—ORCHARD, grass do. \$4—English do. or COCKSFOOT, \$8—HERDS, do. \$3—TIMOTHY, \$5 SAINFOIN,

\$10—MILLET, \$2 per bushel—LUCERN, 75 cts.—SWEET SCENTED VERNAL \$1 50—COW GRASS 75 cts.—TREFOIL, 50 cts. per lb.—RUTA BAGA, 75 cts.—MANGLE WURTZEL, \$1 75 cts. per lb.—CABBAGE seed, 25 to 37½ cts.—CAULIFLOWER, 75 to 100 cts. per oz.—spring TARES, \$8 per bu.—PEAS, 25 to 75 cts. per quart—ONION seed, 20 to 75 cts.—LEEK, 31 to 37 cts.—short orange CARROT, 12½ cts.—PARSNIP, 12½ cts.—LETTUCE, 25 to 75 cts.—RADISH, 12½ to 31 cts.—BEET, 12½ cents—BROCCOLI, 31 to 100 cts.—CUCUMBER, 37 to 75 cts. per oz.—TURNIP seed 50 to 125 cts. per lb.

Virginia Tobacco has been scarce the present week, 6 hdds. new crop inferior quality, at \$6—9 hdds. do. new crop good quality, at \$8.

The Connecticut, Carey, or Dagen PLOUGH.



This Plough is well known in the eastern and southern counties of this State, and likewise in the south and eastern districts of Virginia. Those persons who have used it speak highly of its utility, particularly in working mellow or sandy soils, and stoney or stumpy land. It is so formed as to take an unusually wide furrow, and to crumble the turning soil. Being without a coulter, it is not liable to choak. Robert Sinclair, has, at the request of some of his customers, determined to keep a constant supply, ready made at his Manufactory of Implements; and he now has fifty of them of different sizes, for sale at from 5½ to 10 dollars each. The workmanship is perfect, and the materials are of the best quality. The largest size will bear the draft of four horses. They have no cast iron about them, and are of course not so liable to break.

BALTIMORE,

PUBLISHED EVERY FRIDAY,

BY JOHN S. SKINNER, EDITOR.